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# An Account of the Congo Independent State.

By Henry Phillips, Jr.

(Read before the American Philosophical Society, November 2, 1888, and February 1, 1889.)

## HISTORY.

The creation of the Congo Independent State may be considered as one of the most curious and most characteristic episodes of the nineteenth century. All settlements formerly made in unexplored countries were the results of missionary labors, or of wealth- or fame-seeking adventurers. Motives of policy on the part of European governments then came into play to facilitate the reduction and colonization of the new-found lands. To no such causes was the founding of the Congo Independent State indebted, neither religious fervor nor thirst of gold caused it to see the light. The philanthropy of the King of the Belgians, together with his love of geographical explorations, were to be the means of pouring the light of civilization upon "the dark continent."

It was not even upon the soil of Africa that the Congo Independent State took its origin: its birth place was at Bruxelles, in the palace of a monarch.

On the 12th of September, 1876, King Leopold the Second, of Belgium, held at his royal residence, in Bruxelles, a conference of the most celebrated modern geographers and the most famous explorers of all nations, to discuss and to formulate the best methods of planting firmly on the soil of the African continent the standard of civilization. This assemblage laid the foundation of the "*Association Internationale Africaine*," which subsequently selected for the field of its labors that portion of "the black continent" lying between the western coast and the great lakes of Central Africa.

Two years later, on November 25, 1878, under the auspices of His Majesty, was held a second congress, "*Le Comité d'études du Haut-Congo*," whose object was to penetrate barbarous Africa by ascending the Congo river, whose course had lately been ascertained by Stanley, and to seek practicable means of establishing regular communications along the Upper and Lower Congo, and to create amicable relations for commercial purposes with the tribes that dwelt in the interior, offering to them, in exchange for their objects of value, the varied productions of European industry. Under the auspices of this Society, formed of English, French and Belgian philanthropists and capitalists, the explorer, Stanley, undertook his voyages. The amicable measures pursued by the agents of the Association caused the indigenous populations to look with a friendly eye on the new scheme, and an uninterrupted chain of stations was created

and maintained along the whole course of the river ; no violence, no usurpations, no disrespect of the rights of the native chiefs were permitted, none took place, and the result was the peaceable establishment of settlements whose future was assured.

The philanthropic and scientific ends of the "*Comité d'Etudes*" became interwoven with a political idea, that of founding in the very heart of Africa an immense independent State, and the Comité changed its name and became henceforth "*L'Association Internationale du Congo*." Under this title the Society redoubled its efforts, and by the end of the year 1883, it had concluded with the various independent chiefs of the Congo basin, and that of the "Niadi Kwilu," more than one thousand treaties, by which the native chieftains ceded to it all their territorial rights over the immense domains included within the before-mentioned boundaries.

It now remained only to obtain from the civilized nations some recognition of this new arrival among States ; the very first successful negotiations to that effect were with the United States of America ; on the 10th of April, 1884, the Senate of the United States authorized the President to recognize the standard of the International Association of the Congo as fully as that of any other friendly government. On November 8, 1884, the Emperor of Germany authorized a similar recognition. Subsequently the conference at Berlin was opened "to regulate, in an amicable spirit and with cordiality, the conditions that could assure the development of the commerce of the Congo, and arrange for the prevention of errors and mutual misunderstandings." Diplomatic relations were sought with all the powers that had sent agents to this conference, resulting in the ultimate recognition, by them, of the new State, and, on February 26, 1885, *The Congo International Association* itself gave in its adherence to the resolutions formulated by the conference. Prince Bismarck, in announcing the recognition at the end of the conference, said, "I think that I may express the sentiments of this assemblage in saluting, with satisfaction, this act of the Congo Association. To the new State is to be entrusted the work that we have outlined, and I breathe my most hearty wishes for its prosperous development and for the fulfillment of the grand ideas of its illustrious and noble founder."

But one thing now remained, the official nomination of the sovereign of the Congo Independent State ; a choice already made by the logic of accomplished facts and the unanimous voice of public opinion. With a universal approbation, His Majesty, Leopold II, desired his ministers to recommend to the chambers to pass a law, that, in conformance with Article LXII of the Belgian Constitution, would permit him to accept the sovereignty of another State, and the authorization was granted in the following terms : "Sa Majesté LEOPOLD II, Roi des Belges, est autorisé à être le Chef de l'Etat fondé en Afrique par l'Association Internationale du Congo. L'Union entre la Belgique et le nouvel État sera exclusivement personnelle."

On the 1st of August, 1885, His Majesty, Leopold II, King of the Bel-

gians, notified the powers of the foundation of the Congo Independent State.

#### THE BERLIN CONFERENCE.

While the Association Internationale Africaine was opening the route to Central Africa, *via* Zanzibar, the Comité d'Etudes du Haut-Congo was carrying on its explorations along that river, and the Association Internationale du Congo was investigating the basin of the Congo and acquiring territorial domains and rights of sovereignty. Portugal still asserted her ancient although shadowy and undetermined pretensions over the western coast and the interior. England sided with Portugal, and France, entering by the river Ogooué, sought to become master of the river beyond the stations already established by the Association; Germany seized a number of points on the western coast, and commercial houses founded by Dutch, English, Germans and Americans continued their operations on the Lower Congo or the sea coast, and their mutual encroachments could, at any moment, give rise to their respective governments, a pretext for intervention, and become a source of grave trouble, danger, and even of bloodshed. In order to compose these conflicting interests, France and Germany took the initiative towards assembling a conference, at which should be represented all the nations that had commercial relations on the Congo; fourteen powers responded, *viz.*, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, the United States of America, France, Great Britain, Italy, The Netherlands, Russia, Sweden and Norway, Portugal, and Turkey.

The conference opened at Berlin on November 15, 1884, and on February 26, 1885, the plenipotentiaries of the powers assembled, signed an act of which the following is a resumé.

*Liberty of Conscience* is assured by the first section for the whole immense basin of the Congo, which is admitted without being confused by natural, orographic boundaries; for twenty years no entry-duties shall be charged on any goods. The Association Internationale du Congo has, in its treaties with the principal nations, declared that at no time shall any import duties be levied within its possessions. An export duty representing from 3 to 4% of their commercial value is levied by the Congo Independent State on eight indigenous products. All privileges of exit are likewise granted without any favoritisms to flag or cargo. All strangers are to have equal rights of liberty, freedom of conscience; the aborigines are to be protected in the peaceful possession of their rights and property.

The perpetual proscription of slavery is a fundamental dogma of public law in all the colonies situated in the basin of the Congo; no slave shall be permitted to be sold, no slave mart to be established, on the territory.

The States that have arisen or may arise in the basin of the Congo, and the powers desirous of colonizing, have a right to declare such colonies

under the protection of neutrality, either perpetual or temporary. The Congo Independent State has availed itself of the privilege and has declared *itself forever* to be a neutralized State.

The navigation of the Congo and of its affluents is to be free. No fluvial or maritime toll is to be established along its course. Taxes must only be sufficient to compensate for the expenses of keeping the river navigable and of keeping up the establishments placed on its banks. An International Committee, at which all the high contracting powers have the right of being represented, is to be especially charged with supervising the liberty of navigation and transit upon a footing of the strictest equality ; it must also keep the streams, etc., in good condition, and carry on all necessary work of all kinds which, in time of war, shall be held inviolable and not to be disturbed.

The Congo is to remain navigable, *even in war-time*, to vessels of all nations, whether belligerent or neutral, and *private property is to be respected even if under an enemy's flag*.

The navigation of the Niger and its affluents is rendered free under the same stipulations as that of the Congo, except that the administration of the river is entrusted to those owning Riparian rights, with authority to act separately.

*Conditions of future occupancy.* All future taking possession of territory on the coasts of Africa must be publicly notified, and to be effective must be actual.

Modifications and changes are provided for in the last section of this Act, which must be agreed to by the powers in conference, and other States may be admitted to this agreement upon an equal footing.

#### LIMITS, POPULATION, ETC.

The boundaries of the Congo Independent State are : 1. *On the north*, by the French and Portuguese possessions, determined by the course of the Tshiloango, the Congo and the Ubangi, up to the junction of the fourth parallel, north latitude, with the thirtieth degree of longitude east from Greenwich. 2. *On the east*, by a line following the latter degree to the north-eastern shore of Lake Mwutu Nzige, and to the eastern borders of Lakes Tanganyika, Moëro and Banguelo. 3. *On the south*, by the dividing ridge between the basins of the Congo and the Zambese to the twenty-second degree of longitude east of Greenwich ; then from south to north by the line of the waters of the River *Kussai* to the sixth parallel of south latitude, along which it runs to the sea. 4. *On the west*, by the Atlantic ocean, from the mouth of the Congo to the Bay of Cabinda.

The territory embraced within these limits comprises two millions of square kilomètres, and is estimated to contain some twenty millions of inhabitants, or about ten to the square kilomètre.

The tribes dwelling within this region are independent and are subject each to its own chief, to whom Europeans usually give the title of king, although his subjects may be but few in number. As a rule, the dwellers near the coast are of a peaceable disposition, but of course those more

remote from contact with the whites are more savage and more bellicose. Some of these tribes are man-eaters, and it is stated that, curiously enough, the people who practice this custom are neither among the most ferocious nor those the least amenable to the influences of civilization. With the advent of the Europeans, their customs soon become modified, and it often happens that cannibalism disappears, without any intervention on the part of the whites, by mere force of contact.

Barter is carried on with the natives, who are very skillful in trading being full of subterfuges, and lengthy negotiations are necessary to obtain from the merchants the greatest possible amount of value for the very least equivalent.

Agriculture does not flourish, except so far as concerns products absolutely necessary for their daily life ; women and slaves alone work on the plantations, the men but very rarely taking a hand in such labors, and only when a great exertion is needed.

Among the blacks employed by traders may be found types of all tribes as far as Cape Lopez, and some few from the interior of the continent.

The strongest and best workers are the "Kroo-boys" (from the coast of Kroo, near Cape Palmas), whence they derive their name. All of these blacks speak some English, and some few of them a little French. They receive from five to seven dollars a month, and board and lodging ; they are usually engaged for eighteen months, after which they are paid their wages, either in goods or cash, as they may desire ; the majority generally receive about two-thirds in merchandise. Like other black workmen, they are fond of heavy goods of cotton, and of various colors, table and pocket knives, umbrellas, flintlock guns, powder, tafia, gin, pearls, felt and straw hats, jewelry, second-hand military and naval uniforms, razors, soaps, combs.

The Cabindas act as sailors and domestic servants.

The Loangos are joiners, ship and house carpenters, and coopers.

The smiths, masons and brickworkers come from the English colony, on the Gold Coast.

In the employ of the Congo Independent State are also natives of Zanzibar, Haoussa and some from the head-waters of the Niger.

The negroes have no religious belief, but are given to fetishes, of which the chief are the good genius, or the Creator, and the evil one, or the Devil. These are represented by rudely carved idols and adorned with shields and tatters. Additionally each negro carries about his neck or waist small objects of veneration, or talismans.\*

\* According to a recent traveler, "A curiously-shaped idol, either female or fashioned like a priapus, can still be found at all cross-roads. It is generally a foot in height and stands on a round pedestal raised upon a pole a yard from the ground. In front a flat stone supports a basket, into which passing market people and all who have concluded a bargain make a point of dropping grain or other food, which any starving or destitute person is at liberty to eat."

The same authority states : On the Island of Kimeh, the sacred burial place for ages of the Wabuma chiefs, were many fetishes, "figures of various sizes, all of them equally hideous and obscene." (Bateman.)

## THE JOURNEY UP THE CONGO RIVER.

Coming from the high sea, the first land sighted is a low sandy coast, fringed with verdure as a background, later a red clay; here is Point Pedraô. Further is Shark's point, opposite which, on the right bank of the river, lies

## BANANA.

This is the first of the settlements of the Congo Independent State passed on going up the Congo river, which, at its mouth, is eleven to twelve kilom. wide. Here is a long range of white "factories," built on piles, and the port is accessible to vessels not drawing more than six metres of water; the rise of the tide is 1M.80. This harbor is claimed to be the best between the Congo river and the Cape of Good Hope. Although pilotage be free, an official service has been organized by the Independent Congo State. Every vessel of more than 500 tons, entering Banana, is to pay a fixed tax of 150 fr., which is intended to cover the State for the expenses incurred by the placing of buoys, the building of lighthouses, etc. On paying this due, ships may receive a pilot of the State to take them in and out the harbor without any extra charge. Up to Boma and return pilotage tax is 300 fr. for four days. For each exceeding day an extra charge of 50 fr. is to be paid. Houses, both for dwelling and store-houses, have been built of brick and wood; a hotel has been erected by the Dutch Co. where travelers are boarded and lodged for seven shillings a day.

The chief commercial houses here are as follows:

1. The Dutch Co., having its home office at Rotterdam; founded in 1869, covers a territory of 700 arpents; employs at Banana thirty whites and 800 blacks; has forty stations along the river.
2. The house of Daumas-Béraud et Cie., of Paris, founded in 1865; employs eight whites and 100 blacks.
3. The Compagnie Portugaise du Zaïre which possesses half a dozen stations on the river.
4. Valle y Azevedo, Lisbon; four whites and thirty blacks.

All these houses own wharves and docks as well as sailing-vessels; the Dutch Co. owns four steamers; the French, and Hatton & Cookson Co. each one; the Congo Independent State, fifteen.

After leaving Banana, the stream narrows to five kilom., and is from 20 to 270 metres deep; the current is about five knots. After an hour Boulambemba point, locally known as *the bottomless pit*, is reached; twenty-two kilom. from Banana the "Scotchman's Head" is passed, and eleven kilom. further on, at Kissanga, are situated the Portuguese factories. A short distance further, on the opposite bank, are the factories of Ponta da Lenha, established on the island of Tchiwangi. Here are found the bamboos used in building in great abundance; they cost from 50 to 75 francs per thousand. Even the very largest vessels can come up to this point, where begin the difficulties of navigation at the "Heron Bank."

From Ponta da Lenha to m'Boma the river contracts and is obstructed by several large islands.

At "Fetish Rock" the Congo storms over reefs and expands to 1500 metres in width.

At m'Boma the river is fifty metres deep, and is 4700 metres in width ; here it is divided by islands into two arms.

#### m'BOMA

May be considered as the interior port, or, as a Belgian writer has well expressed it, as "the Antwerp of the Congo;" the tide here is only six or seven centimetres. Here is stored all the merchandise sent from Banana to be distributed in the interior, and here come the natives for traffic. It is at present the capital of the State and the centre of the commerce of the Lower Congo. The Dutch, English, French and Portuguese trading houses have large establishments here, employing about thirty whites and 600 blacks. A flourishing mission has been founded here by the Roman Catholic Church. In 1886 the Congo Independent State installed a postal service. It has also erected here an iron pier, well equipped with cranes for loading and unloading cargoes with the greatest facility. The government storehouses are connected with the wharves by a railroad. A Belgian commercial company, "les Magasins Généraux," is now building at m'Boma a huge hotel and spacious storehouses where all articles of consumption may be obtained at reasonable prices.

Passing up the stream, twenty kilom. after leaving m'Boma, the panorama changes, lofty and well-wooded mountains appearing on the right bank, while those on the left are barren and dry. Here terminates the alluvial basin. Above the large island, "Des Princes," the islets have disappeared, and the river shows only a vast expanse of tranquil water, from 500 to 2000 metres wide, whose banks reach sometimes to an elevation of 350 metres. The navigation becomes more difficult, owing to an augmentation in the strength of the current and the more frequent appearance of rock-reefs and rapids.

Seven hours' journey from m'Boma appears Noki, a Portuguese commercial centre and the last that belongs to that nation on the left bank of the Congo. Here is the frontier marked out by the Congress of Berlin ; from this point both banks of the river belong to the Congo Independent State up to Manyanga, where the French possessions begin.

Along the river between m'Boma and Noki are about thirty factories, all substations of houses established at m'Boma.

Passing "Ango-Ango," "Fuka-Fuka" (where there are commercial houses), Underhill (where there is a Protestant mission), Matadi is reached. At this point begins land transportation for goods, etc. From here will start the railway line which is to connect the Lower Congo with Leopoldville, on the Stanley Pool.

Large ocean steamers can come to Matadi without breaking cargo.



At Vivi, which is situated a little beyond Matadi on a plateau ninety-nine metres above the river, the navigation is stopped by the rapids. Further up the river begin the "Livingstone Falls."

#### TOPOGRAPHY.

The Congo Independent State is divided, topographically, into two regions, the one elevated, which is known as the Upper Congo, the other depressed, the Lower Congo. Between these territories rolls tempestuously the river Congo over thirty-two cataracts and rapids, forming an immense staircase that prevents all navigation for a space of 250 kilometres; it bars access to the most extensive, the most fertile and most healthy portion of the State.

To obviate this obstruction a railway has been planned that will avoid the cataracts and render communication more easy with the Upper Congo.

Lately the fertility and population of the Lower Congo have been called into question, on account of the marshy and desert stretches of country through which the lower river flows, but recent travelers state that this opinion is erroneous; that at a distance of about ten kilometres back from the river-banks there is a dense population, and that the region is fertile and cultivated.

#### CLIMATE.

The year on the Lower Congo is sharply divided into the hot season, or that of the rains, from the end of October until about the middle of May, and the dry season, from the middle of June to the end of September.

Day and night are of nearly equal length; toward 6 A.M. daybreak begins, and about 6 P.M. the evening twilight sets in, abruptly, without the intervening transitions usual in temperate regions.

The climate of Congo is, in comparison with that of most tropical countries, remarkably cool and agreeable. In the hot season the thermometer is seldom more than from 80° to 86° (Fahrenheit) in the shade, and in the "*cacimbo*," or cool season, it usually ranges from 60° during the night to 75° during the day. During the rainy season the markings are higher, and the humidity with which the atmosphere is filled renders the heat almost suffocating. During the dry season all day a refreshing sea breeze blows, frequently with considerable violence, which is replaced after nightfall by an equally strong one from the land, so the atmosphere undergoes a continual renovation, and a light covering is always desirable during the hours of darkness. The light rains occur in the lower country in October, succeeded by the great rains, with violent thunder storms.

Sooner or later the foreigner must pay his tribute to the climate in the shape of a spell of fever, although it can be readily checked by quinine before and after the attack. Careful and nutritious living, together with the avoidance of unnecessary exposure to the torrid heats of midday, and the heavy dews of night, are the best sanitary precautions. Spirits should be avoided.

The European regains by his appetite the strength that he loses by excessive perspiration ; nothing but the extremest cleanliness can remove the epidermis that decays and replaces itself with enormous rapidity in this hot climate.\* Continual baths and the wearing of proper clothing that will readily permit perspiration to take place with the utmost facility are indispensable.

## RESOURCES OF THE CONGO INDEPENDENT STATE.

### A. Mineral.

1. In the chain of mountains, towards the region of the cataracts, called, by the Portuguese, "*La Montagne de Cristal*," are found handsome pink and gray granite, red and rose-colored marbles, and especially remarkable white marble, beautifully veined with green. The quarries are easy to work, being in an easily accessible region, and close to the river.

2. Granites of all kinds are plentiful in the various parts of the Lower Congo, and the various limestones, necessary for building, etc., abound just where their presence is most desirable.

3. Two rich deposits of copper near the Congo, and indications of others pointing to a well-developed copper region, were found by Mr. Dupont whilst hunting for a reported deposit of malachite in the French Congo territory, to the north of the Valley of the Congo, in the province of Kwilu. These carbonates of copper contain usually from sixty to seventy per cent of pure copper.

4. Titaniferous sands were found, but no other indications of gold. Iron shows in abundance.

5. Iron, tin, lead and sulphur show in abundance.

### B. Agricultural.

Whilst the Lower Congo is marked by rocks and arid plains, the traveler is struck, when ascending the river, by the vivid aspect of the luxuriant trees, herbage and vegetation in general, and the wide plains whose agricultural fertility and values seem enormous. A deep, black soil is found, of considerable extent, whose cultivation has resulted in large returns. The deforesting of some parts of the Congo was studied by Mr. Dupont, who is of the opinion that, by a judicious use of the rivers between the Stanley Pool and the Congo, all the devastations and ravages can be repaired, and the best results ensue.

Manioc is abundantly cultivated. 20,000 kilos. to the hectare result in six months, even with a *vicious* system of cultivation.

Palm nuts are found in profusion, in bunches that often number 500 to the cluster. A palm-tree will bear annually a score of such clus-

\* The writers who growl at the supposed impoverishing nature of the food attainable in Central Africa are thus characterized by Bateman : "*Their only ground of plausible excuse being the impossibility of glutting themselves with vulgar masses of British beef, stodgy potatoes, and bile-creating beer.*"

ters, representing in the markets of Europe a value of from twenty-five to thirty francs. The production is 24,000,000 kilos., and can be indefinitely increased. The oil is expressed and barreled in casks of 500 litres capacity, in which form it is transmitted to Europe. The fruit is eatable, and, when cooked, tastes like the *scorzonera*; raw, it makes a very good salad. From the fibres of the palm are woven dress-stuffs, mats, hats, baskets, nets, etc.

The *arachid* is a species of ground nut, largely cultivated by the natives, and used in the preparation of culinary delicacies. A fine oil is expressed from it, which, in commerce, passes for olive-oil. At present the almond-palm, palm-oil and arachid constitute seventy-five per cent of the exports of the Congo.

*Caout-chouc* is very abundant. The gum is brought by the natives in black or white balls, the former looking like Perigord truffles; the latter, however, are the more esteemed. It grows luxuriantly and spontaneously.

*Trees*; the *Baobab* is found on the coast from Ponta da Lenha, and reaches colossal proportions, often measuring about twenty-two metres in circumference. One at Landana can scarcely be encompassed by seventeen persons forming a circle around with outstretched arms, hand in hand.

The *Kolla* is a lofty tree, of frequent occurrence; it bears a rounded fruit the size of a small melon, from which caffeine is extracted.

*Colored woods* abound, red, brown, yellow, all susceptible of easy manipulation; the *tavoula* (a red wood) is especially in demand; at least a dozen tons of woods are annually exported from Banana (1886).

The Cottonwood tree often attains a height of over 200 feet; the Kusu-Kusu, the Redwood, the Camwood, the Teak, Acacia, Ebony, Arborvitæ, Saffu, abound.

*Fruit Trees*: banana, mango (each of which latter trees furnishes, yearly, 400 kilos. of fruit, from which an alcoholic beverage of very fine quality is extracted), the papayer, the maracouja, the lemon, mèagang (or yellow grape), pineapple, exist in enormous profusion.

*Copal* exists in quantities as yet undetermined.

*Cotton* grows wild in the Lower Congo, and all the conditions favorable to its fullest development exist. The specimens already obtained are said to warrant the belief that it can equal the usual American article.

*Tobacco* is cultivated throughout all Africa, but of varying qualities. It has a good taste and an exquisite aroma.

*Pepper* (called by the natives, pépé or pili-pili) is abundant; its fruit is red: it is both large and small.

*Sugar Cane* has only once been cultivated, and the experiments are not complete; abandoned in one place, in 1886 plantations have been formed in another on a very large scale.

*Vegetables*. The onion, alone, of all European vegetables, does not seem to thrive; salads, radishes, peas, carrots, turnips, string-beans, cabbage, parsley, tomatoes, cucumbers, celery, potatoes, all grow well.

Cuttings and slips from Madeira vines have been planted with great promise.

Maize, coffee, sesame, orchal and sorghum grow plentifully.

The inhabitants are willing to work, and both male and female are to be seen in the fields.

#### *Animals.*

Elephants are seldom seen unless a famine drives them towards lower feeding grounds. They are, however, sometimes found. Ivory is an important product exported to the London market. The buffalo, leopard, antelope, wild cat, wild boar, goat and dog abound. The hippopotamus and rhinoceros multiply in the Congo and its affluents; myriads of apes people the forests. The eagle, the hawk and the vulture are the chief birds of prey, and the duck, goose, pigeon, chicken, the turtle dove, the bengalee, the grallœ, the cardinal, green parakeet and gray parakeet with red tail, and kingfisher are found plentifully.

Snakes of the python variety exist in vast numbers.

#### *Cattle.*

Fine herds of cattle are grazing on the Island of Matebba, situated half way between Ponta da Lenha and Boma, where M. de Roubaix of Antwerp has an important farming enterprise. Several hundreds of heads of cattle are kept also by the State at Boma for the consumption of its numerous "personnel." Private commercial houses, as Mess. Valle y Azevedo, possess large quantities of live stock.

In 1888 commercial value of goods handled at the Congo Independent State was 14,000,000 francs, of which 7,500,000 was exports.

#### ARTICLES OF IMPORTATION.

In exchange for ivory, palm nuts, palm oil, arachides, caout-chouc, dye-woods, copal, etc., brought by caravans to the various factories, the natives receive flintlock and percussion guns, flints, powder, cotton goods, rum, pearls, copper rings, table and pocket knives, old clothes, straw and felt hats, cotton and flannel shirts, glass and pottery ware, umbrellas, wooden and iron coffers, locks, chains, tin forks, tin cups, big and little bells, razors, scissors, combs, perfumery, soaps, mirrors, needles, pins and thread, buttons, white ribbands, gardening tools, matches, clay pipes, bracelets, ear and finger rings, copper bands for arms and legs, musical boxes and accordions, etc., etc.

#### COMMUNICATION WITH EUROPE.

1. A monthly line from Liverpool (The African Steam Navigation Co.), taking about forty to fifty days; fare, 700 to 800 francs.

2. The Woerman Line, from Hamburg, at the end of every month. Time, forty-five to fifty days; fare, 750 francs.

3. L'Empreza National, from Lisbon, on the sixth of the month ; twenty-two days ; 750 francs.

4. Nieuwe Afrik. Handels-Vennootschap, Rotterdam, five times a year ; twenty-one to twenty-two days.

5. Hatton, Cookson and Co.'s steamers, from Liverpool.

#### RAILROAD, &c., IN THE CONGO INDEPENDENT STATE.

As above stated, a railroad is to go from Matadi to Noolo, near Leopoldville, on Stanley-Pool, for which the survey, employing fourteen engineers for sixteen months, has just been completed and estimates prepared. Its cost has been estimated at 25 millions of francs, including purchase of rolling stock and miscellaneous expenses in Europe and Africa, and is considered sufficient to pay besides the expenses an interest of 7% during the four years that are deemed necessary for the laying of the road.

The length of the line will be 436 kilometres, of which only the first twenty-six present any engineering difficulties, while the remainder of the line "will be laid under exceptionally easy circumstances." It will have a rail gauge of 75 centimetres, with steel rails weighing 23 kilos., steel sleepers at equal distances of 80 centimetres and weighing 23 kilos., the whole of the line weighing 75 tons per kilometre.

The neighborhood through which the line is to pass abounds with ample materials for ballast, and firm soil is found for the abutments of bridges very near to the surface of the ground.

Matadi, the starting point of the railway on the Lower Congo, is a place easily accessible to sea-going vessels, and where they can discharge their cargoes directly into the freight cars ; Noolo, the terminus at Stanley-Pool, is a short distance above Kinchassa and 3 miles from Leopoldville, well above all the rapids that obstruct and hinder navigation in the region of the Cataracts. From this point light draught vessels can ascend the Congo and its affluents for an uninterrupted distance of eleven thousand five hundred kilometres. Large docks can be advantageously built at Noolo. Between these two first-class stations an intermediate one will be placed at Kimpésé, where travelers will spend the evening, as it is not intended to run any trains during the night, and the distance is too great to be traversed within one day. Stations will also be established at Loufou, Inkessi, and Ntampa, thus dividing the whole distance between the Lower Congo and Stanley-Pool into five sections of an average length of 85 kilometres each.

The journey that now requires a whole month for its accomplishment, entailing delay and often damage, could then be made within two days, and the expense of freighting greatly reduced, enabling goods to be delivered in Europe at a much greater profit.

The navigable waters of the Upper Congo are 6000 kilos. Steamers

can go from Leopoldville almost to the Soudan, by the "Oubangi-Ouelle."

## POLITICAL, JUDICIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION.

The King is the absolute monarch, ruling without any check to or division of his power.

A decree of King Leopold, dated October 30, 1885, organized the Congo Independent State into three departments, *viz.*: Foreign Affairs (to which is entrusted that of Justice), Finance and the Interior. An Administrator-General, named by the sovereign, presides over each of these departments, who deliberate together over the affairs of the State, and submit the results of their councils to the King for his approbation. The departments have jurisdiction as follows :

A. Foreign Affairs, which includes commerce, post-office, justice, legislation, religion, etc., etc.

B. Finances :

(a.) All manner of taxes, duties and imposts ; all regulations of territory.

(b.) The general department of accounts and all matters relating to the operations of the treasury.

(c.) The monetary system.

C. Department of the Interior :

Public instruction, police, hygiene, transportation in all its phases, public roads, public armaments, etc., etc.,

The Governor-General of Congo rules under the directions of this Central Council, assisted by an Inspector of State, a Secretary-General, and many subordinate local assistants.

The territory is divided into eleven districts, administered by a Commission, with one or more adjuncts. The districts are Banana, Boma, Matadi, Cataracts, Stanley-Pool, Kassai, Equator, Ubangi-Uellé, Aruwimi-Uellé, Stanley Falls and Luluaba.

## LAW DEPARTMENT.

Justice is administered by a tribunal of the first instance, and one of appeal.

The Appellate Court has its permanent seat at Boma ; the lower Court, whose place is at Banana, may travel within its district, the Lower Congo, up to Vivi and Matadi.

Other tribunals have been erected at Leopoldville and Lukungu.

The death penalty is abolished, except in the case of cold-blooded, deliberate murder, and voluntary homicide is punished by imprisonment for life.

## THE CIVIL STATE.

There are offices at Banana, Boma and Leopoldville, where are registered the births, deaths and marriages occurring among the European population. Marriage must be preauthorized by the Governor-General, and the ceremony performed by an official to be designated by him. The rights and duties arising from matrimony are governed by the laws of Belgium. Arrivals, departures and changes of domicile are registered at Banana and Boma.

## LAND-HOLDINGS.

When, in July, 1885, the sovereignty of the Independent State was proclaimed at Banana, at the same time a decree was published that no one should attempt to dispossess the natives from any of their lands, and that further, no territorial contract with them should be valid unless made through an authorized agent.

On August 22, 1885, another decree invited all foreign-born inhabitants, who claimed land-rights in the dominion of the Congo Independent State, to declare them before the proper official conservator of titles, so that they could be entered in the registry, and the State could create and confirm a valid and legal title to each proprietor. By this measure considerable confusion and litigation were put an end to, for the blacks had often sold the same property several times over to a different purchaser.

A system, analogous to the "American Land Patent System," was created, and an alienation was to be accomplished, by registry at a record office, the fee for which was twenty-five francs at each enrollment.

For the purposes of sale the State divided all lands into two classes : 1. Those belonging to the aborigines, and unoccupied lands. 2. Those the property of the State itself. Any and all transfers of land in the first category must imperatively receive the approval of the Governor-General before they could be held valid. The lands of the second division were sold only upon spontaneous demand, the contracts being signed by "The Conservator of Titles," and approved of by the Governor-General. If the property in question exceed 100 hectares, or embrace 200 mètres of riparian rights, the contract of sale must first be sent to Bruxelles for the approbation of the central government.

These regulations are only carried out strictly in reference to the Lower Congo region ; on the Upper Congo the acquisition of territory by Europeans is to be encouraged, and they are to be permitted, without pre-authorization, to acquire any unoccupied land not exceeding ten hectares, and not extending more than 200 mètres along the Congo or other navigable water-course, always providing this can be done peaceably and without detriment to other rights. To occupy more land than the amount above given the consent of the government must be obtained. So well was the project carried out that, in less than three years from the date of

the proclamation by the State, the registration of every non-indigenous land-holder was completed, not without much arduous labor.

Matters relating to mines and forests are under the control of the same department that regulates lands. Except on one's own legally registered property no trees nor plantations can be cut or damaged, unless with the consent of the Governor-General or one of his authorized deputies, previously and specially obtained. No mines can be worked without a license from the sovereign, and the sale and transfer of lands by the State does not confer any mineral rights.

### RELIGIOUS MISSIONS.

By the sixth article of the Berlin Conference, all the signatory powers engaged to watch over the preservation of the indigenous populations of that region and to ameliorate their moral and material conditions of existence, and guaranteed an especial protection to missionaries, savants and explorers. Liberty of conscience and religious toleration were expressly guaranteed both to the natives and to European settlers without any restriction whatever.

The care of the missionaries is an astute idea; they are always the precursors of civilization, undergoing hardships, in their spiritual zeal, from which oftentimes men shrink who have no loftier motive than love of wealth. Every mission founded is a central source from whence the influence of white culture sheds, beacon-like, a far-reaching influence among the less famed nations of the world and becomes one more step towards their peaceable conquest by civilization. By them the points of contact are increased, and through them relations of the most friendly character are established and maintained. To their schools resort the young barbarians, desirous of becoming acquainted with the wonder-working arts of the European, and they return not only with a knowledge of rudimentary education, but also with ideas as to how to obtain the most profit from their badly tilled fields, and once again the lamp of science is handed on yet one step further in its dissemination.

The missionaries of Christendom are the barrier to the progress of Islam in the dark continent, an influence that can hardly be overestimated. "Wherever Islam penetrates," writes Dr. Nachtigall, "slavery is installed, and to demolish the traffic in human beings, it is necessary to strike at its source, in Islam."

No traces are to be found of the good results formerly accomplished by the labors of the zealous workers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; indeed, by the eighteenth century, the indigenous races had totally relapsed into a brutal and beastly idolatry. A few isolated attempts were made to remove this sad state of affairs, but without great success. When, in 1885, the Congo Independent State was founded, two missions were existing on the Congo; the *Pères du Saint-Esprit* were installed at Boma and some Protestant missionaries were at Stanley pool.



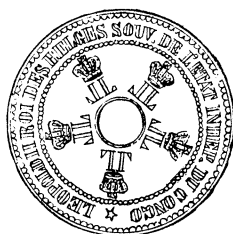
At present *La Congrégation de Scheutveld*, that has attained a remarkable success in Asia, has taken the evangelization of the Congo under its charge, and the Holy Father, in a late brief by which a vicariat was created, has confided to them the noble project. A mission has been established at the junction of the Kassai and the Congo, where schools have been established, not only for spiritual and scientific instruction, but also where the knowledge of manual labor of all kinds is imparted.

Flourishing Roman Catholic missions exist at Banana and at Boma; the Protestants are along the river as far as the Station of the Equator; some religious establishments of the *Pères d'Alger* are on the west bank of Lake *Tanganyika*.

On December 31, 1888, a society was founded under the title of "L' Association Congolaise et Africaine de la Croix Rouge," whose object was to render service to the sick and wounded in time of war, and at all times to give aid and assistance throughout the extent of Africa to all who, in the interests of civilization in Africa, have become ill or injured, as well as to those of the natives who might be suffering. The Society will be represented in the Congo by the Governor-General.

#### FINANCES.

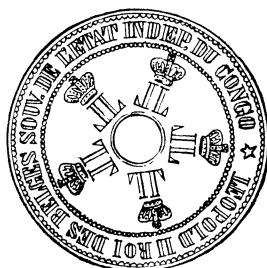
The monetary system is based upon a gold standard. The currency



5 Centimes.



1 Centime.



10 Centimes.



consists of francs and centimes; the franc representing the 3100th part of a kilogramme of gold nine-tenths ( $\frac{9}{10}$ ) fine.

The gold coinage consists of twenty-franc pieces ; the silver of 5, 2, 1 and  $\frac{1}{2}$  franc ; copper, 10, 5, 2 and 1 centime.\*

The gold and silver coins are manufactured in conformity with the regulations of the Latin Monetary Union, and are the finest specimens of coinage of the present generation.

#### PUBLIC DEBT.

By edict of February 7, 1888, the public debt is to be 150,000,000 francs, divided into 1,500,000 obligations of 100 francs each, in 60,000 series of twenty-five each, bearing interest at five per cent.

The debt has ninety-nine years to run, and six times a year a certain number of bonds are redeemed.

In the first eight years premiums are drawn for 1,000,000 of francs ; in the second for 700,000 ; and in the next for 512,000 francs. In the last seventy-five years the drawings will amount to 270,000 francs.

A sinking fund is created for the redemption of the debt as it becomes due.

On February 14, 1888, 10,000,000 francs were issued, in bonds of 100 francs each. On the 7th of May last (1889), a second issue of 60,000,000 francs of the same bonds has taken place.

The annual revenue derived from the State was (in 1886) 1,700,000 francs, which more than defrayed all expenses.

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\* The writer has deposited in the U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C., a complete series of the silver and copper coinage.

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*Some Thoughts on the Sun and Cross Symbols.*

*By Richard Vaux.*

*(Read before the American Philosophical Society, May 17, 1889.)*

Symbols were the characters of original language. The alphabets of all written languages are composed of signs.

To express a thought, a form was necessary. To think was a human faculty. It marked man as the highest type of created beings. A thought was the result of an impression on the mind, made from a sense, or by sensation, through some object, or a consequent correlative emanation.

To find a form that would embody the mind's impression was solved in a sign, or symbol. The mental, or reasoning process, by which this result was reached is not possible of explanation. We know that the senses conveyed to the mind a cognizable impression, and then the mind operated. This process is called reasoning.

The sign was made to represent an impression on the consciousness. This sign, or symbol, is either the impression produced by natural objects, or it is an expression of a revelation, crystallized on that impression.